

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 7 and 11-14 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5 and 7 are amended to better distinguish over the prior art. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Hayes during the February 8 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1, 5, 7 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bowman (U.S. Patent No. 5,999,623), Richards (U.S. Patent No. 6,069,957), Dillon (U.S. Patent No. 5,727,065), Downs (U.S. Patent No. 6,226,618) and Stefik (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,012). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

In particular, the applied references, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least executing accounting to an end user based on a page unit and only if the encrypted content is decrypted and output for printing by the end user, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 7.

Specifically, both Bowman and Richards pertain to methods and systems used in cable television broadcasts to automatically encrypt/decrypt information so that access is restricted

or limited to only customers that have already selected (and paid) to receive cable television broadcasts.

Dillon discloses that periodically, e.g., once a month, the security engine 130 encrypts billing information concerning documents received by the receiving computer 110 during the past month and sends the encrypted billing information to the broadcast center 150. See col. 7, lines 26-30.

Downs discloses a method and apparatus for securely providing data to a user system.

Stefik discloses a feed counting mechanism for reporting fees associated with the distribution and use of digital works.

In contrast to the claimed invention, none of the applied references disclose or suggest at least executing accounting to an end user based on a page unit and only if said encrypted content is decrypted by the end user. The Office Action alleges that Dillon discloses that accounting is executed for a page unit at col. 4, lines 16-20 and col. 7, lines 26-30. However, nowhere in Dillon is this feature disclosed or suggested.


For example, Dillon does not disclose that when executing accounting, information such as "printed number, number of pages printed on one sheet, contents total page number, and points per page" in the accounting information is acquired to determine a fee. On the contrary, Dillon instead discloses that billing is performed based on the received document. Because the applied references fail to disclose these features, any combination of the applied references would not have resulted in a device with improved distribution of digital content and a reduction in falsified accounting data.

Accordingly, because it would not have been obvious to combine the applied references to arrive at the claimed invention, it is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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